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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 002259

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/14/2013

TAGS: [AEMR](#) [AMGT](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [CVIS](#) [EFIN](#) [ETRD](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: TFIZ01: AMMAN SITREP 36 (4/14 1700 LOCAL)

REF: (A) FBIS GMP20030413000213 (B) FBIS

GMP20030413000152

Classified By: DCM Gregory L. Berry for reasons 1.5 (B)(D).

General Overview

¶11. (C) Amman and the rest of Jordan is calm. No reports of any demonstrations anywhere in the Kingdom April 14. Embassy operated on a normal business schedule today. Movements of American personnel remain restricted. Activities at the American Language Center and Peace Corps offices remain suspended.

Consular Issues

¶12. (U) See para 9 below.

GOJ Actions/Statements

¶13. (U) In an April 13 meeting with visiting UN Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq Ramiro Lopes de Silva, King Abdullah affirmed the importance of the UN role in Iraq, particularly its delivery of assistance and basic social services to the Iraqi people. The King indicated that Jordan is prepared to coordinate with the UN in helping Iraq with necessary relief supplies, and reportedly said that two Jordan army field hospitals will soon be sent to Iraq. (Jordan Times 4/14)

¶14. (U) Minister of Information Muhammad al-Adwan in an April 13 statement to the Jordanian Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm "emphasized that the government will deal with the new administration in the interim period in Iraq in a manner that benefits the Iraqi people." The paper said that Al-Adwan also stated that "the Central Bank (of Jordan) has frozen the official Iraqi assets in licensed banks in Jordan and that these assets would remain frozen until the situation becomes clearer and a new Iraqi government is formed." (ref A)

¶15. (U) In an April 13 statement to the official Petra News Agency, Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Mohammad Batayneh announced that a ship carrying 100,000 tons of Saudi oil recently arrived in Aqaba. (ref B)

Security

¶16. (U) No new issues.

Economic and Trade Developments

¶17. (U) Nasri Nowar, Director of Queen Alia International Airport, confirmed that KLM and British Airways had resumed service to Amman this week. He said they would offer limited service the next two weeks, but said that most European carriers intended to resume normal service by the end of the month. Nowar added that current passenger loads were down 40% from this period last year.

¶18. (U) Traffic flow at the Sheikh Hussein bridge in northern Jordan appears to be returning to normal. Authorities at the bridge report volumes at about one-half of normal levels for the past two days, an improvement from the previous week.

Refugee/Humanitarian Issues

¶19. (SBU) 108 people are being held in no-man's land at the Jordanian-Iraqi border, 96 of whom are the Iranians that arrived on April 12. Representatives from the German embassy are meeting with purported German document holders today; conoff will meet with purported US document holders on April 15. GOJ officials confirmed that the person who claimed to be an Amcit did not possess a US passport; UNHCR separately reported that the individual returned to Baghdad this morning. The additional 28-30 Iranians have not yet arrived

at the border.

¶10. (SBU) UNHCR confirmed that nine Iraqis currently are being held at no-man's land. Some of them are laborers who were deported on April 7 from Aqaba and subsequently returned to the Jordanian border; others are ethnic Iraqis without any travel documentation.

¶11. (SBU) The 200 Syrian Ba'athists and Muslim Brotherhood supporters, rumored yesterday to be en route to the Trebil border crossing, have not yet materialized. UNHCR reports that one Syrian family, carrying Iraqi passports, arrived at the Jordanian border yesterday but were denied entry by GOJ officials. The family was sent back into Iraq.

¶12. (C) UNHCR is extremely concerned about the burgeoning population in no-man's land. Although UNHCR Rep Sten Bronee had told the press that conditions in no-man's land are "squalid," UNHCR's senior logistics officer reports that the space & facilities available can accommodate the current population but would be taxed if the population reaches 200. More importantly, UNHCR is beginning to see this as a serious protection issue and a violation of the GOJ's agreements with UNHCR. UNHCR believes that, at a minimum, the Iranians should be admitted to the TCN transit camp and Iraqis without documentation who seek UNHCR protection should be allowed into the UNHCR refugee camp. Given GOJ views that the Iranians are MEK members, we doubt that the GOJ will allow any Iranians to leave the border unless they have proven claims to residency in another country -- and are escorted by their respective embassies to the airport. Refcoord will accompany conoff on the April 15 border visit and will provide a full report on conditions.

Press

¶13. (U) In the late afternoon of April 14, a number of journalists contacted Embassy Press office reporting that a convoy of journalists on the Amman-Baghdad highway may have been attacked or ambushed between Ramadi and Baghdad. The journalists reported seeing one car apparently which had rolled over after apparently being shot at. Reports indicate that one or possibly two journalists -- both of Argentinean nationality -- may have been killed. No further identification was provided. We will follow up as additional details become available.

GNEHM